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Dorothy Iannone

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Like her contemporaries Niki de Saint Phalle and Pauline Boty, Dorothy Iannone uses ecstatic color and patchwork forms to express female sexuality. But the multitude of paintings, drawings, books, sound installations, and wood sculptures made between 1959 and 2014 that fill much of the ground-floor exhibition space for her retrospective present a darker and more compelling psychological story. As is told in a series of drawings with text, Iannone met Dieter Roth in 1967 during a trip to Iceland. For the next seven years they had an intense and complicated affair, the remainder of which is imbedded within Iannone's work, attesting to Roth's status as her constant muse.

In *Your Names Are Love Father God*, 1970/1971, a large-scale collage and acrylic canvas depicts a male figure, wearing strings of big beads, bracelets, and an armband, who has one hand on a naked woman's breast and the other hand reaching for her vulva as he appears to push her down onto a platform of decorative forms, with the work's title written under her body. The most compelling example of Iannone's reduction of relationships and forms is a drawing from 2000, *Miss My Muse*, in which a nude male stands with his arms crossed over his chest, and a halo of gold stars circles his head in the center panel between portions of text detailing, in English and German, Iannone's worship of Roth's scratchy personality.

Iannone's writing describes details of Roth's behavior, but her fixation transforms him into an object, or a force, that wilts before her intellectual and artistic reckoning. Ultimately, Iannone's art is not about Roth or their affair but about her need to have her version of their story told. With her series "Notes for an Autobiography, Part III: An Explosive Interlude," 1979, she writes, "And why have I stayed in Germany so long, working for more than a decade, sending out my vision of erotic love, never faltering in my belief that it is as important for you as it is for me?" It is unclear whether the "you" she addresses is Roth or her viewers. For us, the answer to this question can be as haunting as Roth remains for her.